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Agenda item 92 (d)
Macroeconomic policy questions: science and technology for development

Progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/201

Note by the Secretariat

1. In its resolution 54/201, on science and technology for development, the General Assembly took note of the resolution and decision adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999 on the basis of the report of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its fourth session; recognized the role of the Commission in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system in the area of science and technology for development; emphasized the importance of the activities to be pursued with the framework of the Commission and encouraged support for those undertakings; and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council, proposals for strengthening the coordination of mechanisms on the Commission within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in order to ensure coordination of the various efforts and activities in the area of new and innovative technologies, in particular information and communication technologies, and their applications in such areas as electronic commerce, with the objective of promoting complementarity of activities within the United Nations system.

2. The Secretary-General was also requested to submit to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session a report on the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/201. The present note has been prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat in response to that request.

3. The UNCTAD secretariat has prepared the report of the Secretary-General containing proposals for strengthening the coordination of mechanisms on the Commission requested in resolution 54/201. The report has been submitted, under the symbol A/55/96-E/2000/84, to the General Assembly at its present session, through the Economic and Social Council, which took note of it at its substantive session of 2000.

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4. The report summarizes previous discussions in the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the issue of coordination and presents a number of proposals for strengthening coordination mechanisms, in particular the steps to be taken by the UNCTAD secretariat to create an electronic network relating to science and technology for development, as a means to achieve coordination in the area of science and technology policy and programmes and to improve information sharing, knowledge diffusion and generation of ideas among all relevant United Nations agencies and other major players in this field, including the private sector. The UNCTAD secretariat has already started the process of establishing such a network, expected to be operational prior to the end of 2000. The follow-up to General Assembly resolution 54/201 is also directly relevant to the recent ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council (see A/55/3, chap. III) concerning the role of information and communication technologies in the context of a knowledge-based economy and the proposal to create a task force on information and communication technologies.

5. A more detailed report on the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 54/201 will be prepared following the fifth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, which will be held at Geneva in the spring of 2001, and will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-sixth session.